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## General Committee

**Summary record of the 3rd meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Wednesday, 18 October 2006, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman*: Ms. Al Khalifa..... (Bahrain)
(President of the General Assembly)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Organization of the sixty-first regular session of the General Assembly, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items** (*continued*)

*Request for the inclusion of an additional item by Saint Lucia* (A/61/233)

1. **The Chairman** drew attention to a request by Saint Lucia on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) for the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade" (A/61/233). The representatives of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica had asked to participate in the discussion of the item in accordance with rule 43 of the rules of procedure.

2. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica) took places at the Committee table.*

3. **Ms. Ferrari** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community, said that the year 2007 would mark the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade, which had begun the process leading to the abolition of slavery in the British Empire. Recognition of that important anniversary by the United Nations would present an opportunity for the international community to honour the memory of the millions who had died as a result of slavery and to acknowledge the legacy of slavery as being at the heart of situations of profound social and economic inequality, hatred, bigotry, racism and prejudice, which continued to affect people of African descent to the present day. Slavery and the slave trade were among the most serious violations of human rights in the history of humanity and represented a low point of human brutality. Yet it had taken nearly 200 years for the international community to acknowledge slavery a crime against humanity, and the issue of reparations and compensation for that crime was still outstanding.

4. The issue was one of fundamental importance to the members of the Caribbean Community, who hoped that they could count on other friends and partners in the United Nations to help in commemorating an event that was at the core of their history and existence. The letter requesting the inclusion of the item included, in addition to an explanatory memorandum, a proposed draft resolution. The CARICOM countries had already been assured that the African Group and many others would join in sponsoring the resolution.

5. **Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community, said that the previous speaker had rightly emphasized that the commemoration of the anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade was not only a matter of importance to the Caribbean States but one that should stir the conscience of humanity. It had taken nearly 200 years for the international community to acknowledge slavery as a crime against humanity, a crime of genocide. Other crimes of genocide had been commemorated in the recent past. He would urge Member States to join in sponsoring the proposed draft resolution.

6. **Mr. Baja** (Philippines) and **Ms. Cheng** Hong (China) said that their delegations warmly supported the inclusion of the item and intended to become sponsors of the resolution.

7. **Mr. Adekanye** (Nigeria) said that the United Nations should demonstrate awareness of the profound impact of the transatlantic slave trade. His delegation supported inclusion of the item and intended to sponsor the resolution.

8. **Mr. Butagira** (Uganda) said that the slave trade represented a serious crime against humanity that called for reparations and a full apology. His delegation wholeheartedly supported the inclusion of the agenda item and intended to sponsor the resolution.

9. **Mr. Muñoz** (Chile) said that the Committee had rarely seen a request for an additional item as timely, important and substantial as the request submitted by the CARICOM countries. The commemoration should serve as a reminder that the international community should never forget or overlook the commission of such heinous crimes as the slave trade. His delegation supported the inclusion of the item and anticipated sponsoring the resolution in the General Assembly.

10. **Mr. Mérorès** (Haiti) said that his delegation fully associated itself with the remarks of the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Jamaica explaining the reasons for the inclusion of the item. Haiti had been one of the first nations to suffer from the transatlantic slave trade and one of the first to

break free of slavery, but the countries affected had suffered and continued to suffer from the aftermath. His delegation wholeheartedly supported the inclusion of the item, it intended to be a sponsor of the resolution and encouraged others to do so.

11. **Mr. Anshor** (Indonesia) said that it was important for the international community to recognize that the transatlantic slave trade had been one of the worst violations of human rights in mankind's history and had left a legacy of economic and social inequality, racism, prejudice and bigotry in many parts of the world. Most importantly, the commemoration would serve as a reminder of the constant need for the United Nations to take measures to prevent the recurrence of such practices in their contemporary forms. His delegation supported the request for inclusion of the item.

12. **Mr. Chidyausiku** (Zimbabwe) said that his delegation joined others in supporting the inclusion of the item and hoped that it would serve to remind the international community of the need to implement the decisions taken by the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

13. **Mr. Sow** (Guinea) said that it was only just reparation to commemorate the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. His delegation warmly supported the inclusion of the item and intended to sponsor the resolution.

14. **Mr. Belinga-Eboutou** (Cameroon) said that the African States had had occasion already to express their support for the initiative by the CARICOM countries to commemorate the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. His delegation stood ready to support the inclusion of the item and to sponsor the resolution. The purpose of the commemoration was to re-read history in order to learn lessons that would help the international community to ensure that such a thing never happened again.

15. **Mr. Mubarak** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that the slave trade had constituted a heinous crime against humanity that called for action within the United Nations and was condemned by all the African States. His delegation supported the proposed inclusion of the item and encouraged others to do so.

16. **Mr. Wood** (United Kingdom) said that his delegation fully supported the inclusion of the item and looked forward to working with others to ensure a consensus outcome.

17. **Mr. Yousfi** (Algeria) said that slavery was one of the most serious crimes that had been committed in the history of mankind. His delegation therefore supported the inclusion of the item and would be happy to sponsor the resolution.

18. **Mr. Rinchhen** (Bhutan) and **Mr. Al-Murad** (Kuwait) said that their delegations supported the inclusion of the item.

19. **The Chairman** said that the representative of Benin had asked to participate in the discussion of the item. If she heard no objection, she would take it that the Committee wished to accede to his request.

20. *It was so decided.*

21. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Zinsou (Benin) took a place at the Committee table.*

22. **Mr. Zinsou** (Benin) said that Benin had been one of the centres of the slave trade that had drained Africa of its lifeblood and was one of the root causes of the situation that prevailed in Africa to the present day. In 1992 Benin had set up a programme to promote reconciliation between Africa and the Black diaspora in the Americas that had resulted from the slave trade. His delegation hoped to see the matter receive the attention it deserved in the General Assembly and stood ready to sponsor the resolution.

23. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion in the agenda of an additional item entitled "Commemoration of the two-hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade" under heading I.*

24. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.*

25. *Ms. Ferrari (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica) and Mr. Zinsou (Benin) withdrew.*

*Request for the inclusion of an additional item: note by the Secretary-General* (A/61/234)

26. **The Chairman** drew attention to a request contained in a note by the Secretary-General (A/61/234) for the inclusion in the agenda of the current session of an additional item entitled "Extension of the terms of the ad litem judges of the

International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994".

27. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly the inclusion of an additional item entitled "Extension of the terms of the ad litem judges of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994" under heading I.*

28. *The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the item should be considered directly in plenary meeting.*

*V. Allocation of items*

*Item 68. Report of the Human Rights Council*

29. **The Chairman** reported that her Office had conducted consultations on the matter of allocating item 68, Report of the Human Rights Council. A number of compromise formulas had been put forward in the spirit of reaching consensus on the issue, and those initiatives represented progress and commitment by all Member States to reaching an agreement. In the light of the importance attached to the work of the Human Rights Council and its report, she appealed to all members of the Committee to continue to strive to reach a compromise solution promptly.

*The meeting rose at 3.45 p.m.*